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About Presenters:

Anita Ratnam is the Executive Director of Samvada, an NGO that works with young people, focusing on their livelihoods and career development.

Neelam Chibber is one of the leading social entrepreneurs of the country. She is the founder of Indus Tree that promotes locally owned and operated craft manufacturing enterprises. She also the Executive Director of Mother Earth a socially oriented company that straddles craft with big business.

Raghav Rajagopalan is a specialist on organisational culture and human processes. He specialises in supporting handicrafts promotion and rural development.

Ritu Sethi is the Chairperson, of the Craft Revival Trust which is an organisation committed to the mapping and documentation of intangible heritage of crafts, textiles, folk and tribal arts and the oral knowledge systems that support them.



Title of Paper: **A Symposium on Traditional Occupations in a Modern World**

Abstract:

This Key Note Symposium will look at a spectrum of issues facing traditional occupations and their implications for career counseling and livelihood planning.

Traditional occupations like small holder farming and crafts are floundering today weighed down by feudalism within communities practicing these, as well as hostile markets that prefer the agribusiness corporation to the farmer and the techno savvy mass producer to the artisan. Young people from farming and craft communities often find that the lack of dignity, of intellectual challenge and of economic reward, makes their parents' occupations, something to run away from.

At the same time, instances of organic farmers as successful modern eco- businessmen, and of artisan collectives as aesthetically focused export oriented entrepreneurs throw up several interesting questions about the "modernization" of the "traditional". Today there are farmers and artisans emerging from time warps, re-negotiating primordial caste identities and gender norms, and struggling with new worldviews and finding new ways of engagement with society and the market.

This Key Note Symposium will examine the challenges posed by these instances for career counseling and livelihood planning with young people from such communities. An unwitting encouragement to them to abandon these occupations in search of status and security has several implications for the individual, as well as for notions of occupational mobility.

The Session will also focus on subtle messages about traditional occupations conveyed in the course of career guidance, especially to those who don't belong to farming/artisan families. How these occupations (and those who practice them) are to be perceived - as belonging "to the past" or as voices of sanity and health for the future- needs serious examination. The symposium will thus help in placing issues concerning traditional occupations, in the broader discourse of careers and livelihoods.